RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 22nd August, 2005/31 Sravana, 1927 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

[MR. CHAIRMAN *in the Chair.*]

MEMBERS SWORN

Gujarat

Shri Suryakant Krupashanker Acharya
Shri Ahmed Patel
Shri Surendra Motilal Patel

West Bengal

Shri Swapan Sadhan Bose
Shrimati Brinda Karat
Shri Chittabrata Majumdar
Shri Abani Roy
Shri Arjun Kumar Sengupta
Shri Sitaram Yechury

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we take up Questions. Question No. 361.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Conservation and restoration of statue of Lord Gomateshwara

*361. SHRI LALIT SURI:
DR. VIJAY MALLYA:†

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the world's tallest statue of Lord Gomateshwara and its supporting structures need to be strengthened,

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. Vijay Mallya.

(b) if so, the steps undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for conservation and restoration of the heritage structure; and

(c) whether there is any proposal with the ASI for installing a lightning conductor to protect the statue?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) The monolithic statue of Gomateshwara, carved out of a single boulder, is resting firmly on the bedrock. Hence, there is no need for strengthening the statue . The cloistered mandapa around the statue is also structurally stable.

The Archaeological Survey of India takes up requisite scientific preservation of the statue periodically. An estimate of Rs. 3.39 lakhs has been approved for preservation works during the current financial year. There is a proposal to install a lightning conductor to protect the Gomateshwara statue during the current year.

DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government has given an extremely precise and to the point reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mallaya, let the first supplementary be put by Shri Lalit Suri. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI LALIT SURI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, Lord Gomateshwara, also known as Lord Bahubali-a Jain saint, has been worshipped for centuries. Its monolithic statue is standing atop one of the hills, Indragiri in Karnataka. It is 58.6 feet tall and is the tallest monolithic statue in the world made of granite. It was created in 983 AD by Chamundaraya, a general and minister of the Ganga King Rachamatta. It is a symbol of peace, tolerance and non-violence. Sir, seeing the importance of this great statue, I would like to ask the Minister whether any provision has been made to complete the restoration work, including installation of lightning conductors before *Mahamastak-abhisheka* festival, which is going to be held in 2006, after 12 years.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, the description given by the hon. Member is very correct. *Mahamastak-abhisheka* takes place once in 12 years, is likely to attract millions of devotees and pilgrims, in scale,

perhaps, it will only be next to the Kumbh Mela. We are conscious of the magnitude of the event. Therefore, this year, the Planning Commission, in consultation with the State Government, has sanctioned Rs. 75 crores by way of providing infrastructure. I just mention, Sir, that the monument is made of a boulder of granite; it is structurally stable and firm. However, we will go in for what may be called hydrophobic treatment so that when the huge and anointing ceremony takes place, no damage is caused to the monument.

DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Mr. Chairman, Sir the hon. Minister has replied very, very precisely and has said that the statue of Gomateshwara which is carved out of a single boulder is on bedrock and, therefore, safe. Sir, I would like to ask a question as to what is the methodology used to determine the safety, not only of the statue of Gomateshwara, but also several beautiful historical monuments that we have in our country, which, I regret to say, are not cared for in the best of way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Mallya, you limit you supplementary to Lord Gomateshwara.

DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Sir, I am limiting it to this particular statue. I would like to know from the hon. Minister specifically about the methodology used to determine its safety, whether any international experts have actually been consulted. I would also like to know whether any preventive maintenance has taken place, or, whether we wait for things to happen before we act, particularly keeping in mind the *Mahamastak-abhisheka* that is going to be held in February, 2006, at which lakhs of people are expected to attend.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, there are monuments and monuments. This monument is structurally stable. We have our own inhouse expertise. There is no report of any kind of possible damage. But, when mahamastaka-abhisheka takes place, when millions of people participate, when they offer oblations, certain chemical damage could be caused. For that, we are taking preventive measures. I have already referred to the method called the hydrophobic treatment. So, we get the monument washed properly use a chemical called silicon-compound so that when all kinds of things are offered, the monument is not damaged.

श्री प्यारे लाल खंडेलवाल: माननीय सभापति जी, जैसा अभी माननीय मंत्री जी ने कहा कि वर्ष 2006 में कुंभ के बाद यह सबसे बड़ा मेला होगा, तो मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूं कि आप जो धनराशि उसकी व्यवस्था के लिए या उसके काम के लिए रिलीज करने वाले हैं, ऐसा देखा गया है कि धनराशि बहुत देर से रिलीज होती है, जिससे वह उपयोग में नहीं आ पाती है, तो क्या यह पैसा समय पर रिलीज कर दिया जाएगा? मैं चाहूंगा कि मंत्री जी इसका आश्वासन दें।

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, this is an amount that is being released through the Planning Commission in consultation with the State Government. It gives me pleasure to inform you that the State Government has already begun to evince keen interest and they are taking brisk steps. The State Government in this regard is entitled to incur expenditure and then claim money. There is no question of money not being spent in time.

श्री मोती लाल वोरा: माननीय सभापति जी, माननीय मंत्री जी ने बहुत विस्तार से प्रश्न का जवाब दिया है। मैं केवल उनसे एक ही बात पूछना चाहता हूं कि वर्तमान वर्ष में तो जैसा आपने कहा कि 3 लाख 39 हजार रुपए की स्वीकृति दी गई है, क्या इसके पूर्व के वर्षों में भी इसको मेंटीनेन्स के लिए कोई स्वीकृति दी गई थी? यह तो वर्तमान वर्ष के लिए आपने कहा कि 3 लाख 39 हजार रुपए की राशि एप्रूव की गई है, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यही जानना चाहता था कि इसके पूर्व के वर्षों में कोई राशि इसके लिए दी गई है या यह पहली बार दी जा रही है?

श्री सभापति : आप क्यों जानना चाहते हैं? ...(**व्यवधान**)... चलिए, छोड़िए। नैक्स्ट क्वेश्चन।

*362. [The questioners Shri Datta Meghe and Shri Vasant Chavan were absent. For answer *vide* page 25]

Financial assistance to Sanskrit pandits

*363. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:†
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Surendra Lath.